

question he had framed about whether [Babbitt] told Eckstein that Ickes had called [Babbitt].”⁷¹⁴ Babbitt denied having thought – at the time he wrote to McCain – that if he said he mentioned Ickes’s name to Eckstein, further investigation was likely. Nevertheless, he stated that he “thought it important to lay out the whole thing” in his October 1997 letter to Sen. Thompson because he “had some concern that the August 30 letter would mislead a reader about whether or not [he] had actually invoked Harold Ickes’ name.”⁷¹⁵ He said he does not know why his letter to Thompson did not address the statement by Eckstein that he (Babbitt) had made a remark about Indian political campaign contributions which had been discussed in the news media by that date.

In conflict with statements he made to investigators during DOJ’s preliminary investigation, Babbitt denied in his Grand Jury testimony that he had edited the letter to McCain. In November 1997, he had told investigators the McCain letter was drafted by others and that he “probably” edited a draft, making some changes, then had it redrafted, and then signed it.⁷¹⁶ By contrast, he told the Grand Jury in July 1999 that he read the prepared letter, “adopted” it and was “satisfied” with the language.⁷¹⁷ He also said that he considered the letter to be an important matter when he read and signed it.

⁷¹⁴*Id.* at 250-51.

⁷¹⁵*Id.* at 240.

⁷¹⁶DOJ Prelim. Babbitt Int. at 5.

⁷¹⁷Babbitt G.J. Test., July 7, 1999, at 298-99.